What are the Reformed / Calvinistic "Doctrines of Grace" in TULIP?

The classic Reformed “doctrines of grace” are commonly summarized in the acronym TULIP, standing for five interconnected teachings about how God saves sinners. Each point is meant to highlight that salvation is entirely of God’s sovereign grace from beginning to end.[1] [2] [3] [4]

Total depravity

“Total depravity” teaches that the fall has corrupted every aspect of human nature—mind, will, affections—so that people are spiritually dead and unable to come to God or believe savingly in Christ apart from regenerating grace. It does not mean every person is as evil as possible, but that sin pervades the whole person such that no one can, of himself, choose God in a way that results in salvation.[3] [4]

Unconditional election

“Unconditional election” teaches that before the foundation of the world God chose certain individuals to salvation in Christ, not because of any foreseen faith, works, or merit in them, but solely according to his own gracious purpose and will. Faith and repentance are seen as the result of this electing grace, not the condition that causes God to elect.[4] [5] [3]

Limited (particular) atonement

“Limited atonement” (often rephrased as “particular redemption” or “definite atonement”) teaches that Christ’s death was designed to actually and effectually secure salvation for the elect, rather than merely make salvation a possibility for all. In this view, the atonement is sufficient for all but efficient only for those whom the Father has given to the Son, guaranteeing their redemption.[2] [5] [4]

Irresistible (effectual) grace

“Irresistible grace” (also called “effectual calling”) teaches that, in addition to the outward gospel call that can be resisted, God gives the elect an inward, efficacious call by the Holy Spirit that overcomes their resistance and brings them willingly to faith. This grace does not coerce against the will but renews the heart so that the sinner freely and gladly comes to Christ, and this divine initiative cannot ultimately be thwarted.[6] [5] [4]

Perseverance of the saints

“Perseverance of the saints” teaches that those whom God has elected, for whom Christ has died, and whom the Spirit has regenerated and effectually called will be kept by God’s power and will persevere in faith to the end. True believers may fall into serious sin and experience seasons of declension, but God preserves them so that they never finally or totally fall away from a state of grace.[3] [4]

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1. https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/tulip-and-reformed-theology-introduction
2. https://www.apuritansmind.com/tulip/
3. https://www.gotquestions.org/doctrines-of-grace.html
4. https://reasonabletheology.org/five-points-calvinism-defining-doctrines-of-grace/
5. https://reformationbiblecollege.org/blog/what-are-the-five-points-of-calvinism
6. https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-does-tulip-make-you-feel
7. https://journal.rts.edu/article/from-the-archives-the-five-points-of-calvinism/
8. http://www.reformedworship.org/resource/classic-tulip-bouquet
9. https://www.challies.com/articles/renaming-the-doctrines-of-grace/
10. https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/tulip-the-five-points-of-calvinism/
11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-zRSdQk29A
12. https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/sbc-life-articles/the-tulip-of-calvinism/
13. https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheologyDiscussionGroup/posts/9315445495154197/